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Editorial

Arroyo is digging her own grave

Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz is daydreaming when he says the US-Arroyo regime will crush the NPA within ten years. Gloria Arroyo is delirious if she thinks she can crush the NPA in a year or two simply by adding a billion pesos to the AFP budget and intensifying the total war against the revolutionary movement.

Their fantasies and claims are without basis. The armed revolutionary movement continues to grow in strength throughout the country. The NPA has reaped successive victories especially in the past months. There are growing mass protests over the regime's unpatriotic and anti-democratic policies, plans and programs.

Arroyo's true intent is to brag and draw continuing support from US imperialism and her reactionary allies, cover up numerous cases of corruption and her despicable crimes against the people and give free rein to all-out fascist attacks against the people.

Arroyo's "end game" will fail. Arroyo has not learned from the repeated failure of all of the AFP's Internal Security Operations Plans (oplan) in the past three decades, from Marcos' Oplan Katatagan to Oplan Bantay Laya in 2002.

Arroyo's crazy dream of quickly crushing the revolutionary movement will fail as did

past oplans. Arroyo's corrupt, antipeople and unpatriotic regime and its armed minions cannot defeat the CPP, NPA and the rest of the revolutionary movement that represent the progressive, democratic and patriotic forces. The people are increasingly disgusted with the Arroyo regime and its armed thugs. On the other hand, they support, nurture and cherish the people's army.

The revolutionary forces have been able to prove through practice the correctness of their nationalist and democratic struggle and of advancing widespread and intensive guerrilla warfare following the line of protracted people's war. Consequently, the NPA and the other revolutionary forces have been reaping a string of victories in their struggle against the state's reactionary and fascist forces.

Counterrevolution can never succeed. The AFP, vanguard for counterrevolution, is rotten to the core. The system it serves and protects is just as thoroughly rotten. As usually happens with the funds allotted to them, the one billion pesos meant for the AFP and PNP will be embezzled by Arroyo's pampered generals and military and police officers. It will only deepen factionalism, heighten unrest among the rank and file and weaken the resolve and combat effectiveness of the entire armed forces.



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Factionalism runs deep in the AFP-PNP, especially between the corrupt, fascist, pro-Arroyo leadership on the one hand and the disgruntled junior officers and foot soldiers on the other. Many of these junior officers and ordinary soldiers, including those from a number of big and specialized combat units, are ready to abandon the regime and fight it. There is a leading section among them that has patriotic and democratic ideals and is open to a working alliance with the revolutionary forces and the open democratic movement.

The dirty war will intensify. The reactionary armed forces have been waging an increasingly dirty war after having suffered successive defeats and casualties. They do not primarily seek out the armed revolutionary forces who can fight and ably defend themselves. The Arroyo regime's real targets are unarmed civilians and the democratic forces in the legal arena.

More than 300 persons in the past two years have been killed by the death squads unleashed by the regime to assassinate progressive leaders and activists of the legal

democratic movement. The number of political assassinations under the Arroyo regime has exceeded that of all other puppet regimes, including the openly fascist Marcos dictatorship.

Expect Arroyo's dirty war to become dirtier. The regime has acknowledged that civilian casualties during AFP attacks are inevitable. The repressive and terrorist campaign waged by the military, police and death squads will surely become more vicious and brutal to the people.

More human rights violations are expected especially in Central and Southern Luzon where 4,500 additional troops will be deployed. All villages in all towns of Bulacan, Pampanga and Nueva Ecija have been targeted for saturation drives.

The dirty war will boomerang on Arroyo. Arroyo's all-out exercise of state terrorism has only succeeded in provoking the people to persist with their revolutionary struggle. She is digging her own grave.

The people will not surrender and bow down to Arroyo's fascist onslaught and will instead loathe her cruel regime. In the face of Ar-

royo's fascist attacks, the people must intensify their struggle on all fronts to accelerate the demise of her puppet and fascist regime.

The anti-Arroyo mass movement and alliance must be expanded and strengthened to advance and intensify the mass campaign to oust the bogus, rotten, fascist and puppet regime. Mass actions in the streets, schools, offices and towns must be stepped up even as venues like investigations, parliament and the courts continue to be utilized.

A big chunk of the armed forces must be won over to the side of the people, convinced to abandon the regime and contribute their strength to the struggle against Arroyo's unpatriotic, undemocratic and fascist regime.

More than ever, the people's abject poverty and oppression prove the correctness and need to advance and intensify revolutionary armed struggle. This is the revolutionary forces' response to the regime's rabid attacks on the people.

There is need to escalate tactical offensives against the Arroyo regime's armed fascist forces. The regime and its fascist generals and armed thugs must pay dearly for every life they have extinguished. Notorious fascist and pro-Arroyo officers and military units must pay for their blood debts and the other heinous crimes they have committed against the people. The NPA's tactical offensives will serve as a significant contribution to the struggle to end Arroyo's much despised regime.

The additional weapons Arroyo will be giving to the AFP-PNP will end up in the hands of Red fighters and the people with the escalation of the NPA's tactical offensives. The revolutionary forces will grow stronger and triumph and will witness the Arroyo regime's departure from Malacañang.

AB



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A billion peso gimmick against corruption

Various sectors and personalities view Arroyo's allocation of a billion pesos to fight corruption as nothing but one huge gimmick. The money will just be misappropriated by the Arroyo government's crooked and corrupt officials.

Ironically, Arroyo declared her fight against corruption even as a major anomaly involving the PNP's purchase of ₱322 million worth of guns and vehicles without public bidding was being uncovered.

Despite Malacañang's efforts to block the investigation of large-scale graft, the public is well aware of how Gloria Arroyo, her husband, children and closest toadies have plundered the national treasury.

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez has admitted that ₱1.3 trillion in government funds have been lost to graft since Arroyo assumed the presidency in 2001.

The biggest cases of corruption include:

1) the misappropriation of public funds for Arroyo's presidential campaign in 2004, including ₱2.9 billion from agricultural funds, ₱544 million recovered from the Marcoses' ill-gotten wealth, ₱2 billion

from the Road User's Tax and ₱4 billion from Philhealth;

2) the overpricing by ₱1.1 billion of the construction cost for the Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard;

3) the acceptance of a \$14 million bribe for the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc. contract;

4) the acceptance of a \$20 million bribe for the Caliraya Power Plant to be sold to Industrias Metallurgicas

Pescarmona Sociedad Anonima-Argentina;

5) the overpricing by \$6 million of the contract between the Philippines and Lockheed for the AFP's equipment;

6) the acceptance of hundreds of millions of pesos regularly delivered to Malacañang by Philippine Games and Amusements Corp. Chairman Efraim Genuino;

7) awarding to YNN Pacific Consortium Inc. the right to buy the Masinloc Power Plant despite the former having no capital aside from its connections to Malacañang.

AB

NPA tactical offensives in North Central Mindanao Region

Five soldiers, including a lieutenant were killed and at least four others wounded in a series of NPA tactical offensives in North Central Mindanao Region this June. The NPA also implemented a punitive strike in the region. Meanwhile, hundreds of civilians have been displaced by the AFP's intense military operations in the area.

The NPA's Rexan Perez Command (RPC) harassed operating troops of the 26th IB last June 16-17 in Sitio Bindom, Barangay Busdi, Malaybalay, Bukidnon. Three soldiers were killed and three others were wounded in this military action.

RPC snipers killed 2Lt. Al Mier of the 26th IB last June 12 in Barangay Zamboanguita, Malaybalay. That same day, a squad of guerrillas under the Jabagat-Acenas Guerrilla Unit of the Eking Balacuit Command launched two harassment operations against patrolling troops of the 8th IB in Abakahan, Mat-i, Claveria, Misamis Oriental, killing a soldier and wounding an undetermined number of others.

The RPC also launched a punitive action on the evening of June 8 against Concepcion Basic Builders Inc. in Sitio Tagpaniki, Zamboanguita. Concepcion Basic Builders, owned by Ong Oh, actively works against the revolutionary movement and abuses its workers. The Red fighters burned two concrete mixers, three dumptrucks, a payloader, a bulldozer, a steamroller, a grader, a compressor and an engine. The guerrillas also confiscated a .38 revolver. This is the third time Concepcion Basic Builders has been punished by the NPA. Punitive actions against the company had been previously launched in Butuan City and Surigao del Sur.

The AFP vented its ire on unarmed civilians after the series of setbacks it suffered at the hands of the NPA. More than 70 families from the mountain sitios





of Mahayag, Malilong, Biernes and Baloodo in Zamboanguita aside from residents of the neighboring barrio of St. Peter have been forced to evacuate their homes after a UH1H "Huey" helicopter conducted strafing runs in Mt. Panataron at the Bukidnon-Agusan del Sur boundary. Due to intense military operations, this area is now "no man's land" where soldiers shoot anyone they see on site. **AB**

NPA punishes death squad element

Revolutionary justice was meted last June 4 on Cpl. Oliver Berja of the Philippine Army Intelligence Group and an element of the AFP's death squad in Misamis Occidental. A group of partisans under the Front Monterosa Command conducted the punitive action in the public market of Calamba, Misamis Occidental.

Berja was one of the most notorious killers targeting unarmed activists suspected of supporting the armed revolutionary movement in Misamis Occidental.

He was responsible for the killing of Junie Halem, a Bayan Muna activist murdered in Barangay Sulipat, Calamba last December. Berja also abducted and killed Aniceto Cainila, barangay captain of San Isidro, Calamba. The AFP accused Cainila of being an NPA sympathizer.

Berja actively maintained an intelligence network in the towns of Lopez Jaena, Plaridel, Calamba and Sapang Dalaga in Misamis Occidental. **AB**

Rampant killings continue

Adelighted Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, the regime's foremost butcher and chief of the 7th ID has ordered more large-scale and escalated military operations in Central Luzon after Arroyo announced June 16 the release of a billion pesos to crush the revolutionary movement in two years.

Palparan pinpointed the towns of Lubao and Sasmuan, Pampanga as primary targets of the military campaign. He named as next targets the towns of General Tinio and Peñaranda, Nueva Ecija and Gapan City.

Last week, Palparan ordered the deployment of 500 troops and the construction of detachments in 57 barangays of the City of San Fernando, Angeles City and Mabalacat in Pampanga, and in Malolos City, Bulacan, Obando, Hagonoy, Pandi and Sta. Maria in Bulacan.

Various progressive parties and organizations have decried this new order, saying that their members who the regime constantly link to the armed revolutionary

movement are now in greater danger. They fear that the regime's butchers would now brazenly go about their terror campaign.

Following are the latest reported victims of fascist killings:

June 20. Masked gunmen shot dead activist and Karapatan member Eladio Dasi-an in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental. Dasi-an's motorcycle was hit by four men aboard a jeep who alighted and shot Dasi-an.

June 19. Unidentified men killed couple Hazel and George Vigo in Kidapawan City. Hazel used to be a member of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and served as media liaison officer for Rep. Emmylou Talinio-Santos (1st District, North Cotabato). George was also an activist. They were ambushed on their way home from the market.

June 17. Two men aboard a motorcycle killed Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas-Western Mindanao media officer Tito Marata.

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Gloria the hypocrite

The reactionary government repealed the death penalty law on June 6. Malacañang's great effort to have the law repealed is part of Arroyo's attempt to ingratiate herself with the Catholic Church and evade continuing questions on her regime's legality.

Arroyo sanctimoniously preaches on the sacredness of human life. Her regime has shut down the lethal injection chamber in Bilibid, but it has intensified the killings of activists, journalists and its other perceived enemies. The regime shows mercy for sentenced criminals, but passes extrajudicial sentence on people whose only crime is to resist a criminal regime.

The power to judge and execute those they deem guilty has been passed on completely to the butchers of the AFP and PNP.

The regime claims that the death penalty has never been an effective deterrent to criminality. But criminality can never be crushed by a government that perpetrates the most heinous crimes. **AB**

Persecution of Comrade Joema Sison

The Arroyo regime continues to persecute comrade Jose Ma. Sison. This June, the regime's minions announced the filing of 632 cases against Ka Joema in various courts in the Philippines and The Netherlands where he currently resides.

Among the cases to be filed against Ka Joema are those that involve the deaths of Romulo Kintanar and Arturo Tabara who were both killed while resisting arrest by the NPA. The regime has likewise implicated Ka Joema in several murders committed by death squads against leaders and members of progressive organizations—a big insult and slander against him. The regime has also accused him of having ordered NPA tactical offensives and other military actions since 2003.

The filing of fabricated court cases, a worn-out harassment tactic by the regime, is used to divert the masses' attention from the growing number of human rights violations, electoral fraud and corruption. In a

statement, Ka Joema announced that the people's attention cannot be diverted from the US-Arroyo regime's criminal responsibility in the killing of more than 680 legal activists, the forcible abduction and torture of hundreds more and widespread attacks by the military against the working class in various regions.

Under international law, Ka Joema is beyond Philippine jurisdiction. As a political refugee, he is protected by the Refugee Convention and Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. These conventions prohibit Ka Joema's deportation from any country to a place where he would be under threat of torture and inhumane treatment. Moreover, no extradition treaty exists between the Philippines and The Netherlands. AB



Supreme Court orders halt to Batasan 5 case proceedings

THE Supreme Court ordered the Department of Justice (DOJ) on June 14 to stop hearing the rebellion case against the Batasan 5 and 40 others pending the resolution of questions on the legality of a previous rebellion case filed against

Anakpawis Rep. Crispin "Ka Bel" Beltran and 1Lt. Lawrence San Juan.

The Makati RTC Branch 137 had already earlier dismissed the rebellion case against Bayan Muna Reps. Satur Ocampo, Teddy Casiño and

Joel Virador, Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano and Gabriel Women's Party Rep. Liza Maza because the inclusion of their names in the list of accused in the rebellion case filed against Ka Bel constituted a procedural lapse. AB

"Rampant...," from page 4

Marata was aboard a tricycle in Barangay Loboc, Oroquieta City. The killers flagged down the tricycle and shot Marata.

June 12. Two men aboard a motorcycle shot and killed Alyansang Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon leader Rodolfo de los Santos in Bongabon, Nueva Ecija.

June 8. Masked men aboard a van shot and killed Bayan Muna-Kalinga secretary-general and Cordillera People's Alliance official Rafael Markus Bangit. He was traveling to Baguio City from Kalinga and was killed when the bus he was riding stopped at the Pines Restaurant in San Isidro, Isabela. AB

Environmentalists urge Japan to withdraw aid

International environmental groups are urging Japan to review its development aid program for the Philippine government due to the rampant killing of environmental activists here. The groups include Friends of the Earth (FoE)-Japan, the US-based International Rivers Network (IRN), the Korean Asian NGO Center and the Yon Ghe Community University of Taiwan. Funds from Japan are used for energy projects, dams and mines.

These groups called on the Arroyo government to stop the killing and harassment of environmentalists fighting against mining, illegal logging and other forms of environmental abuse. About 15 environmental activists have been killed under the Arroyo regime. Two other activists have been abducted and tortured.

One of the recent victims, Jose Doton, was the leader of the Tignay dagiti Mannalon a Mangwayawayaya ti Agno (TIMMAWA), a partner organization of Japanese NGOs working against the destructive San Roque Multipurpose Dam Project. Doton was killed in San Nicolas, Pangasinan last May. Last March, suspected elements of the 48th IB abducted Joey Esteribar in Baler, Aurora. Esteribar was an activist and broadcast journalist who was vocal against illegal logging in the province. AB



Video work in Southern Mindanao

The NPA Merardo Arce Command (Southern Mindanao Regional Operational Command) formed Pulang Bagani Productions (PBP) in 2005 in response to the Party's call to strengthen video production work to help in education and propaganda.

The lack of knowledge in this line of work and unfamiliarity with the medium posed a huge challenge to the comrades assigned to the PBP. But after basic training, PBP successfully released its first video production "Rebolusyonaryong Medik." The video featured the high level of medical and surgical knowledge and experience of the NPA's medics. Comrades experienced in surgical procedures helped with the video production.

The production received positive commentaries from viewers, inspiring the PBP to develop further their knowledge and work.

Documentation of tactical offensives

The PBP next focused on the upsurge of tactical offensives in the region this past year. The Merardo Arce Command and PBP formulated guidelines on the conduct of video documentation during military actions.

A video project was planned for the NPA raid of the PNP station in Magpet, North Cotabato on June 26, 2005. PBP documented the tactical offensive starting with the planning session up to the raid and withdrawal. The videographer was attached to an NPA team so he could document how the Red fighters overran the station and effected the policemen's surrender. The videographer was assigned a security detail and issued a pistol for his personal defense.

Three weeks after the raid, PBP release "Kilab" an in-depth documentary of the tactical offensive.

The 25-minute video featured a clear and dynamic coverage of the raiding unit's activities. It showed the various planning stages, including the creation of a relief map that ensured that each comrade had a clear idea of the target's layout.

The video also showed the other operational stages—travel to the target, the quick and systematic capture of the station, disabling the policemen, seizure of equipment and firearms, and safe withdrawal from the area. The video vividly captured how the NPA seized 24 firearms in an eight-minute raid without firing a shot.

The video highlighted the Red commanders and fighters' skills in intelligence work and the NPA's strict adherence to international humanitarian laws and the rules of war. "Kilab" has been reproduced and distributed to guerrilla fronts, towns and the mass media.

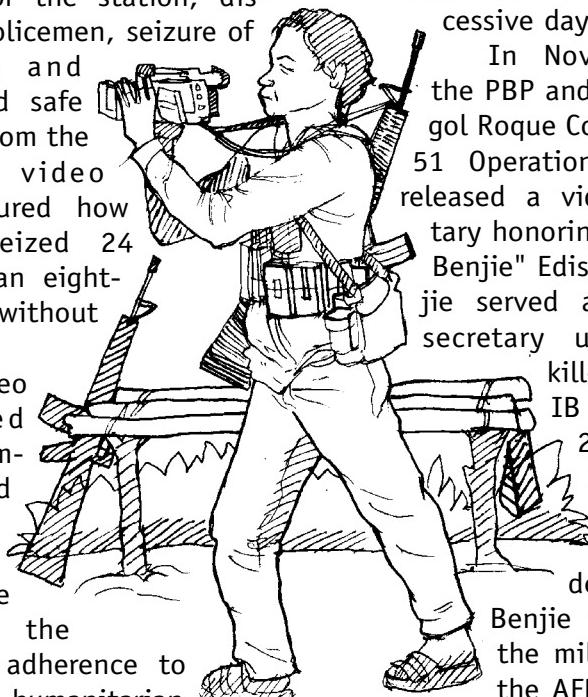
This experience became a launch pad for better video documentation of other tactical offensives like the ambush in Montevista, Compostela Valley and the raids on PNP stations in Quezon, Bukidnon; in Loreto, Agusan del Sur; and in Lingig, Surigao del Sur.

Alternative film

The PBP and the Merardo Arce Command's Public Information Bureau also released in October 2005 a 30-minute interview with Leonardo Pitao, popularly known as Ka Parago. The interviewed featured Pitao's views on current national and local issues, as well as the current state of the revolutionary movement. The video, a slap in the face of the 73rd IB that bragged about capturing Ka Parago within six months, was widely distributed locally and abroad. It was shown on local television for three successive days.

In November 2005, the PBP and the Magtanggol Roque Command (Front 51 Operational Command) released a video documentary honoring Renante "Ka Benjie" Edisa, 32. Ka Benjie served as the front's secretary until he was killed by the 39th IB on November 21, 2004. Witnesses recounted on film how the defenseless Ka Benjie was killed by the military, refuting the AFP's claims that Ka Benjie was armed and died in an encounter.

Revolutionary video documentaries are an alternative to the prevalent influence of feudal and bourgeois television and film that penetrate even guerrilla fronts and zones. Revolutionary films are distributed to the masses in guerrilla zones and fronts in the region. Public showings are held in barrios,



Continued on "Video...," page 7

Ka Apol, new warrior

A group of Red fighters is merrily singing at 9:00 a.m. in a guerrilla camp of NPA-Front 14 along the boundary of Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Sur. They are practicing for a cultural presentation tonight in a nearby barrio. One of the distinctive voices in the group belongs to Ka Apol.

Ka Apol, 23 years old and single, joined the NPA last February. She is assigned to a platoon in a guerrilla front in Northeast Mindanao Region (NEMR). She holds a degree in education from one of the universities in Mindanao.

Ka Apol was active in campus and social issues in the university in 2004. In 2005, she was recruited into the Kabataang Makabayan and was eventually assigned as education officer of her collective.

Upon graduation, she decided to work fulltime in the student sector.

In February 2006, her collective granted her request for a three-month exposure program in the countryside. A few days after integrating with a guerrilla unit, she decided to join the NPA, to which her collective did not object.

Ka Apol is one of ten new recruits in the NPA's Front 14. Six of them are women. Three are from universities in various cities of Mindanao. Aside from them, there are three female students on exposure programs. The new recruits for Front 14 represent the region's response to the CPP's call to heighten recruitment for the people's army from among the youth and students. The revolutionary movement is well aware that the skills and knowledge of educated youth greatly contribute to the advancement of the armed revolutionary movement in the coun-

try side.

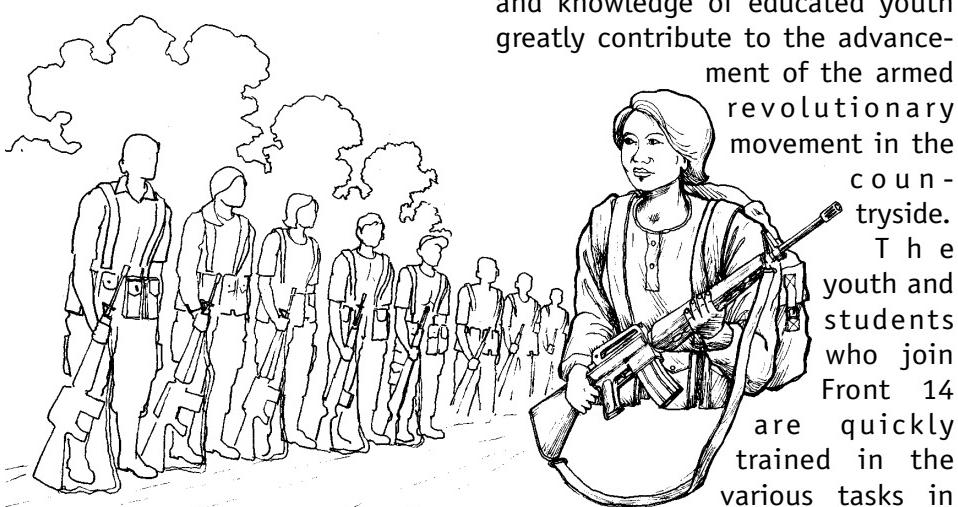
The youth and students who join Front 14 are quickly trained in the various tasks in

the people's army. According to Ka Borg, the front commander, youth from the cities easily adopt to tasks related to their knowledge and experience such as education, propaganda, medical, technical, and administrative work. They easily learn their duties and in due time contribute significantly to their units.

Ka Borg admitted that youth and students initially encounter difficulties during long hikes, in doing farmwork, waking up in the wee hours of the morning and other activities that are part of a peasant's way of life. But new warriors quickly learn these things and overcome their limitations.

At first, Ka Apol had difficulty rising at 4 a.m. and waking up different times at earlier hours to take her turn at sentry duty. But she easily adapted to this, especially since she knew how crucial it was to the lives of all comrades in her unit. She experienced the hardship of long marches especially during the rainy season when trails are slick and muddy. There were times when she was injured by thorns, sharp rocks and protruding branches that littered the trail. She experienced hunger when operating enemy troops blockaded supply routes. But she said, "Hardships are temporary and easily overcome if we keep in mind the importance of our objectives." She added that "Although work with the people's army and the situation in the countryside are difficult, I am happy to be with the comrades and masses. They help me greatly to become persevering and determined in the face of hardships and limitations."

Ka Apol has always thought highly of the NPA. She had doubts whether a college girl like her could withstand the rigors of guerrilla life. She said that the AB article on Ka Nadia (see January 21,



"Video...," from page 6

especially those with electricity, television and CD/DVD players. Laptops are used for viewing in the guerrilla camps and other places without electricity. Videos are effective supplemental materials for mass education, with the gist of the topics discussed presented to the masses in lively and easily comprehensible form.

In just a year, revolutionary video-documentaries and films have been popularized among the masses and allies in guerrilla fronts and other influenced areas. Viewers eagerly await each video project released by Pulang Bagani Productions, especially since these are closely entwined with mass struggles and burning social issues.

AB

2006 issue) inspired her to remould, join the NPA and follow in the steps of those like Ka Nadia.

Her parents know about her involvement. They worry for her safety but they respect their eldest child's decision and commitment. They were former members of a peasant mass organization in the 1980s but became demoralized by setbacks during the period of disorientation. Their support for Ka Apol's deci-

sion to join the people's army is indicative of their renewed trust in the revolutionary movement.

At this time, Ka Apol and the other new recruits of Front 14 are waiting for the start of a formal politico-military training. Like other new members of the NPA, she is ready to be assigned to any line of work upon finishing training and other studies she may take up.

AB

Recruitment of Philippine mercenaries

The recruitment of Filipino mercenaries for US aggression in Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries grossly violates the national sovereignty of the Philippines and that of the invaded countries. It violates international law and the civilized conduct of war. It worsens US imperialist aggression and heightens the threat of US military intervention in the Philippines through the use of armed mercenaries against the revolutionary forces and even the open and legal democratic movement.

Philippine recruitment is done by Blackwater USA and Triple Canopy, fascist military contractors that supply the US with mercenaries. To give their operations a semblance of legality, they claim to be recruiting security consultants, security specialists and guards.

Blackwater uses a layer of several companies to cover its recruitment operations. A placement agency registered with the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency is used to recruit Filipinos to serve as security guards for the US Embassy in Afghanistan. Their jungle survival and close quarters combat training is provided by Satelles Solutions Inc., a local company representing Greystone Ltd, Blackwater's international arm.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales

persistently claim that Malacañang has no knowledge of, or involvement with, Blackwater. But numerous documents and witnesses reveal that it was Malacañang, through the Office of the President, that approved the operations of Blackwater and its front companies. With Malacañang's intervention, Fil Salonga, head of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), allowed Satelles Solutions Inc. to conduct its business. A memorandum of agreement between Satelles Solutions and the SBMA dated May 29 allows Satelles to establish a recruitment center (and even set up a firing range) using a two-hectare lot and two large buildings for training activities and operations within the Subic Freeport for three years.

Blackwater USA and other private military companies (PMC) save a lot of money by recruiting mercenaries in US semicolonies. Mercenaries from these countries are paid 20% (usually \$1,000-\$1,750 a month) of what an American mercenary receives (usually \$5,000-7,500 a

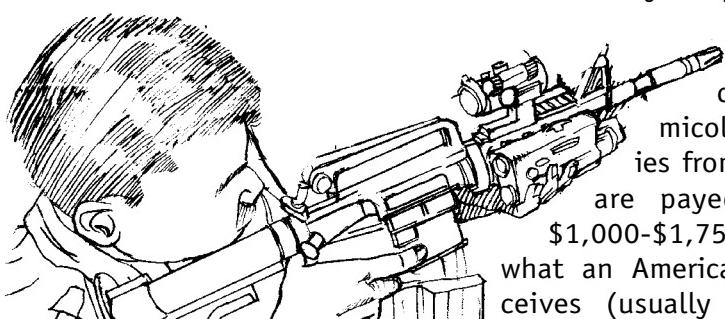
month).

Blackwater's target for recruitment includes active and former members of the AFP's elite forces like the Army Scout Rangers, Army Special Forces, Air Force Special Operations Wing, Navy Special Warfare Group and Marines Force Recon. It also recruits members of the PNP Special Action Force. Men from these units are easily attracted by the higher pay they will receive as mercenaries.

Despite the official ban on working in Iraq, Blackwater USA has been able to send Filipino mercenaries there. Blackwater and Triple Canopy have accomplices within the Department of Foreign Affairs. Some mercenaries have been shipped to Saudi Arabia or some other third country and from there shipped to Iraq. Triple Canopy has a recruiting agency in Subic, and has recruited and shipped to Iraq more than 300 Filipino mercenaries. It plans to recruit about 1,000 Filipino mercenaries each month.

There is need to thoroughly expose, criticize and expel from the country Blackwater, Triple Canopy and other agencies recruiting Filipino mercenaries for the US' wars of aggression and its occupation of other countries. It is likewise possible that the US may use Filipino mercenaries against the revolutionary forces and the open and legal democratic movement in the Philippines.

AB



US using mercenaries in its wars

The US makes rampant use of mercenaries in its occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. At least 25,000 US mercenaries are deployed today in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries. Most of these mercenaries are Americans, but a large number also come from countries such as Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru, Fiji, India, the Philippines, Bosnia and South Africa. There is roughly an equal number of US mercenaries and regular troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The mercenaries are recruited and trained by private military companies like Blackwater USA and Triple Canopy.

The US has three main objectives in using mercenaries: The first is to conceal the deployment of additional combat and security troops to avoid media criticism and mass protests and to prevent George W. Bush's further isolation. There are mounting protests against the war in Iraq and Afghanistan due to the growing number of American casualties. By June 2006, US casualties

amounted to 2,500 killed and 18,000 injured and maimed. There is an equally large number of soldiers suffering from war-induced mental trauma. US deployment and casualty figures are thereby reduced by using mercenaries who are excluded in official listings.

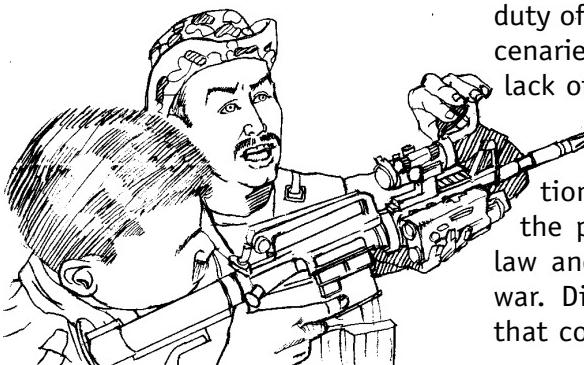
The second is to make up for dwindling US military recruitment. Last year, the US Army and the US National Guard had recruitment deficits of 10% and 25% respectively. Troop strength is maintained partly by extending the tours of duty of their active personnel. Mercenaries are used to fill in for the lack of regular troops.

The third is to be able to conceal "special operations" that are unacceptable to the public and prohibited by US law and the international rules of war. Dirty and heinous operations that could not be done legally and

openly by regular troops are often assigned to mercenaries who operate covertly and outside the law. This way, the US government and armed forces are kept free from controversy. One of the jobs the US military assigns to mercenaries is the torture of prisoners kept in US prisons abroad, like those in Abu Ghraib in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. Many mercenaries also work as security guards for US military bases and high-ranking US officials in occupied countries. AB

What are mercenaries?

Mercenaries are paid troops who are not part of a country's armed forces. They fight in wars solely for their personal benefit. The use of mercenaries violates international rules of war and is not recognized by the Geneva Conventions. Mercenaries cannot be accorded rights as prisoners of war. Outlawed throughout the world, they are often used in covert and illegal operations. AB



Blackwater and Triple Canopy

Blackwater USA provides private security forces that work as unofficial reinforcements for the US military. It was founded in 1997 by Erik Prince, a former SEAL trooper and an ultra-conservative supporter of the Republican Party and George W. Bush.

Blackwater is the largest security contractor for the US government and is one of the main beneficiaries of the US war on Iraq. Its income has grown by more than 300% since 2001. Blackwater provided personnel for the US attack on Fallujah in November 2004, where hundreds of innocent civilians were mercilessly massacred by American armed troops.

Triple Canopy, based in Chicago, Illinois, was

founded by members of the Delta Force, a unit of the US Special Forces. It currently has more than 1,000 personnel in Iraq, 200 of whom are Americans. The majority are recruits from Chile and Fiji. Triple Canopy also recruits in Peru, Colombia, the Philippines and El Salvador.

In 2004, it was awarded a \$90 million six-month contract to protect 13 officials of the US colonial government in Iraq established in 2003. Officials of Triple Canopy were also strong supporters of the Republican party and the Bush-Cheney campaign. AB





Rallies rail against cha-cha

THOUSANDS of demonstrators in various parts of the country launched protest actions against charter change on June 12, the 108th anniversary of Philippine independence from Spanish colonialism.

In Manila, 6,000 policemen and 300 soldiers failed to stop a 10,000-strong march to protest cha-cha. The streets were filled with red, white and blue banners as the marchers converged on Liwasang Bonifacio in the afternoon. In Caloocan City, 3,000 rallyists gathered in front of the Andres Bonifacio monument to protest tyranny and

widespread poverty in the country.

More than 15,000 protesters took to the streets of Bacolod City, Negros Occidental. Led by Bishop Vicente Navarra, they decried Malacañang's ongoing campaign for cha-cha and the Mining Act. The rallyists called for continued struggle for genuine freedom.

In Iloilo City, Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo led 3,000 anti-Arroyo protesters on a three-kilometer march from Jaro Plaza to the Provincial Capitol Grounds. Lagdameo decried the Arroyo government's indifference to the country's burgeoning problems and called on

the people to resist the regime's dictatorial policies.

Police violently dispersed the mass action in Kawit, Cavite. They arrested 13 protesters including Ma. Theresa Pangilinan, who was previously arrested in April for heckling Gloria Arroyo while the latter was delivering a speech at the Cavite State University. Police released the arrested activists after three hours.

In Davao City, rallyists from Compostela Valley, Davao del Sur and Davao del Norte failed to enter Davao City after being blocked by soldiers under Task Force Davao.

Protest actions were also launched in Baguio, the City of San Fernando, Legazpi, Cebu and various cities in Mindanao. AB

Police violently disperse anti-CARP rally



SOME 5,000 peasants from Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon rallied in Manila from June 8-12 to slam the government's sham land reform program and growing fascist abuses against their organizations and communities. They marched towards Mendiola on June 9 along with their supporters.

Hundreds of policemen blocked and violently dispersed the march. Scores were injured, including two who suffered head wounds and were treated in a hospital. The marchers continued on to Mendiola where they were met by water cannons and another violent dispersal.

The peasants timed their protest action to coincide with the 18th anniversary of the bogus Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) last June 10. They decried the Arroyo regime's plan to extend the anti-peasant CARP until 2013. According to the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and PAMALAKAYA, the Arroyo regime plans to use CARP as a means to embezzle funds intended for the peasants. Arroyo has already misappropriated funds from the Marcoses' sequestered ill-gotten wealth earmarked for CARP.

The bogus CARP has never benefited the peasantry and has instead been used to consolidate landlord monopoly and deprive peasants of their lands. KMP said that CARP has further strengthened big landlords like Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, the country's largest landgrabber. AB

Supreme Court suspends land distribution in Hacienda Luisita

FARMWORKERS of Hacienda Luisita decried the Supreme Court's recent issuance of a temporary restraining order on the distribution of the hacienda's 6,000 hectares to beneficiaries. The Supreme Court ordered last June 16 a temporary stop to the planned land distribution following a petition from the Cojuangco-owned Hacienda Luisita Incorporated (HLI). HLI claimed that the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council and DAR decision to distribute the land violates the Stock Distribution Option Agreement (SDOA) signed by the hacienda's farmworkers in 1989.

The farmworkers and the United Luisita Workers Union (ULWU) vowed to continue asserting their right to till the hacienda's land. AB

Arroyo's wealth doubles

GLORIA Arroyo's financial assets have almost doubled since she became vice president. According to her 2005 Statement of Assets and Liabilities (SAL), she now has ₱79.2 million or 90% more than the ₱41.5 million she had in 1999 when she was still Estrada's vice president.

The Arroyo couple has ₱55 million in bank

deposits and ₱6 million in property. A tract of land in Coron, Palawan worth two million was listed as the couple's latest acquisition. Arroyo's SAL also indicated that the couple owns vehicles worth ₱6.8 million, jewelry worth ₱7 million and heirlooms, furniture and books worth ₱3.4 million.

Arroyo's SAL, however, does not fully disclose her and her husband's assets. It failed to mention other properties such as the LTA (Lourdes Tuason Arroyo) Building in Makati, houses in Forbes Park and La Vista Village in Metro Manila, agricultural lands in Negros Occidental and real estate in the US. **AB**

Bombings, an Arroyo regime scheme

THE Arroyo regime tried to alarm the people by planting and successively detonating bombs in various parts of the country last week. The first bomb exploded in the Grepalife building in Makati last June 6. A second bomb exploded in front of jueteng lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda's house in Lubao, Pampanga last June 9. Bombs also exploded beside police stations in Quezon City and Lawton, Manila last June 11. A bomb exploded inside the National Capital Regional Police Office in Camp Bagong Diwa, Bicutan, Taguig City last June 13. The latest explosion occurred in Makati City last June 19.

The PNP has accused the group Taong Bayan at Kawal (Tabak) for the bombings. Tabak has denied the accusation. The PNP has also implicated a group allied with former Sen. Gregorio Honasan and many other groups in the bombings.

Using the bombings as a convenient excuse, the regime announced the possibility of a renewed imposition of a state of national emergency to control the people's movements and curtail civil liberties. The bombings are also meant to terrorize people from joining anti-Arroyo protests. With Malacañang especially fearful of the huge protest actions set for the State of the Nation Address (SONA), the regime has gone to the extent of announcing that the bombings would continue until after Arroyo's SONA on July 24. **AB**

Arroyo's cunning budget ploy

MALACAÑANG claims that it was the Senate's intransigence that prevented the approval of the 2006 budget. But a closer look into events would reveal that Malacañang had no interest in the approval of the 2006 budget and has all along wanted a reenactment of the 2005 budget.

For eight months, Malacañang intentionally delayed submitting the proposed budget to Congress. Close to the end of the congressional session, however, Malacañang's lapdogs in Congress suddenly inserted provisions for the pork barrels of congressmen and the president and pressured the Senate to pass these into law. The budgetary insertions include a ₱64-billion fund for Malacañang that covers ₱3 billion for the Kilos Asenso Support Fund and ₱3.69 billion for the Kalayaan Barangay Fund, two graft-plagued programs under the president's direct control.

The Senate refused to approve these budgetary insertions, fully aware that the funds would be used by Arroyo to buy the loyalty of local officials and bankroll her ambition to change the constitution. Consequently, there were two versions of the budget—a Congress version and a Senate version.

Eventually, the 2005 budget had to be reenacted—a decision favorable to Malacañang since the entire government budget now comes under its jurisdiction. Since the reenacted budget includes provisions for government projects already completed and those for which funds have already been allotted, Arroyo may freely align funds any way she wants. The entire 2005 budget of ₱907 billion has thus effectively become Arroyo's very own pork barrel. **AB**

Military officers involved in electoral fraud— **Senator Biazon**

SENATE National Defense Committee chair Sen. Rodolfo Biazon confirmed the involvement of military officers in electoral fraud that secured Arroyo's victory in the 2004 polls. Biazon announced this on June 16 when he disclosed his committee's final report on its inquiry into the involvement of high-ranking AFP officers in electoral fraud. Biazon said his committee is in possession of sufficient concrete evidence to prove large-scale cheating in the 2004 elections. Those primarily involved include former Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon (currently Philippine Army chief), three other generals and other senior AFP officers.

The AFP last July 2005 tasked Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga of the Philippine Navy to conduct an investigation on allegations of military involvement in the cheating. Mayuga finished his investigation in November but the regime refuses to disclose its results due to the numerous anomalies that were unearthed. Malacañang has so far agreed only to disclose parts of the report absolving Esperon and other officers close to Arroyo. **AB**

